

Big Sky Libraries

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Montana State Library [MSL]

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Legislature

In a few short months, the legislature will convene in Helena to consider bills and the budgets of state agencies. MSL's budget contains significant new proposals of interest to Montana's library community. The first proposal is to extend the funding for the database project. The Governor has approved \$460,000 for the next two years to continue the statewide purchase of an electronic periodical database. Montana libraries from the Mansfield Library at the University of Montana to the Fortine Elementary School use the product to give their users access to information.

Another item affecting libraries is the Governor's proposal to add a new state aid program for public libraries. Eligible libraries include those that levy five mills or more; meet state standards for public libraries; and serve a county in which the mill value is less than the state's average. Public libraries are primarily supported by a property tax on the taxable property of an area. When the value of the property decreases, so does the revenue for the library. Montana has many counties in which the value of property is decreasing. To alleviate the burden on local taxpayers and to insure that these communities can provide quality library services, the program

would provide supplemental income. The Governor is asking the legislature to appropriate \$400,000 for this important program.

Another legislative issue will be the funding for the Natural Resource Information System (NRIS). NRIS is currently funded through contributions by state agencies, the resource indemnity trust fund, the general fund, and contracts. Due to changes in the availability of contracts, MSL asked the Governor to increase the amount of general fund support. The Governor approved an increase and a change in the method in which NRIS costs are appropriated to state agencies. These changes will be the subject of consideration by MSL's appropriation committee.

The state library is also supporting two bills. The first is a bill allowing communities to establish library districts, similar to school districts. The second bill is a clarification of federation law and establishing, in law, the state aid program described above.

Visit MSL's home page for bill drafts and fact sheets [<http://msl.state.mt.us/admin/bills.html>].

Calendar

For more information on these and other Montana Library events, visit our web calendar: <http://msl.state.mt.us/calendar.html>

December 13 -- Montana State Library Commission Meeting, Montana State Library Conference Room - Helena

February 23-24 -- Offline 2001, Carroll College Campus Center in Helena. Presentation topics scheduled so far include wireless technology, networking, standards, Web page construction, proxy servers, and data migration. Contact: Brenda Grasmick (444-1984, bgrasmick@state.mt.us)

A Word From Our State Librarian

A few good things

Our weariness with elections has become a given. At the start of the season, we complain voraciously about the tone and quantity of the media blitz touting candidates and issues. As the din continues, we become catatonic or slip into cynicism. Both states derive from a sense that our choices don't really matter. However, far from the maddening hubbub, Montana voters will have the ability to vote on an issue that matters – the future of their public libraries. Voters in Cascade, Lewis and Clark, and Missoula Counties have the privilege of voting for something that affects the quality of their community life.

The voters in Madison County also have an important decision to make about their libraries. The question before them is whether to create a unified county library with a mill levy rate sufficient to provide quality library service. This vote cumulates an 18-month long project, which demonstrated to Madison County residents what unification and more funding could mean to library services. An advisory committee, pictured and highlighted elsewhere in this newsletter, painstakingly examined each library and the library needs of the community to create a plan for unification and a budget. Now, the voters will decide if the plan goes forward.

In the age of spin and pander, I'm encouraged by these local elections, exemplified by Madison County. These initiatives prove that enough people not only care about libraries but are willing to work hard to place these library issues before the voters. If the past successes of Montana library issues are an omen, then most of the ballot issues will pass. Good people, good ideas, and good services influence voters to part with their hard-earned dollars to provide education and information for their communities. Good luck.



Karen's Schedule:

November 15	Networking Task Force, Helena
November 30	SummitNet Executive Council, Helena
December 1	BCR board, Denver
December 13	MSL Commission, Helena
December 14	Geographic Information Council, Helena

Commissioner's Corner

David Johnson, Chair

With this edition we are inaugurating a column to keep you abreast of the issues that are being addressed by the Montana State Library Commission.

The Commission meets bi-monthly, generally in Helena, but with at least one meeting each year in another Montana library community.

There are seven members on the Commission. Five are appointed by the governor for staggered three-year terms. The appointees are Mary Doggett of White Sulphur Springs, Rosemary Garvey of Butte (the Vice Chair), Al Randall of Troy, Dorothy Laird of Whitefish, and David Johnson from Billings (the Chairperson).

The remaining two members are Cheri Bergeron, Helena, the designee for the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Michael Schulz, Dillon, the appointee of the Commissioner of Higher Education.

Our main focus for the next several months will be to monitor and support several legislative proposals designed to strengthen public libraries in Montana. In the January issue, we will discuss the details of those proposals, and solicit the support of the entire library community.

Commission Meeting Highlights

Linda McCulloch, candidate for Superintendent of Public Instruction, addressed the Commission. The Commission asked Ms. McCulloch a number of questions about her plans if she was elected to office. Elaine Sollie-Herman, Republican candidate for the office, was not able to attend the meeting.

The Commission also discussed the five-year LSTA evaluation plan, agreeing that the Library Services Advisory Council would serve as the evaluation committee. They expressed reservations about limiting the evaluation to LSTA funded activities and asked that NRIS and the Library and Information Services Department be included.

The next Commission meeting will be in Helena on December 13th. Please look for the December agenda and complete minutes of the October meeting on MSL's home page.

Montana State Library Volunteers Honored

"Our Volunteers are Jewels" was the theme of the annual MSL Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon. Seventy-six of MSL's 123 volunteers attended and were presented with decorated pins, designed by staff member Diane Gunderson, and made by MSL staff.

Montana author, Roland Cheek, from Colombia Falls, was this year's keynote speaker. Roland stressed the importance of literacy and the library's role in support of literacy. He commended the Talking Book Library's (TBL) volunteers for providing talking books to blind, low vision, physically handicapped, and reading disabled Montanans.

After Roland's speech, annual awards were presented. Jack Buckley received the Telephone Pioneer award for his years of dedicated work

repairing TBL's playback machines. Phyllis Herbert was the recipient of the Special Appreciation award for her many years of hard work as Recording Program Assistant. Mary Zednick, Lea Blunn, and Jane Briney received the recording Team of the Year award. Seven volunteers received gifts for five years of service, and seven others for ten years of service to the library. Nine youth volunteers received engraved coins from Cheri Bergeron, who represented the State Library Commission.

The luncheon ended with a rendition of the song, "Hey, Good Looking" performed by the local group "The Bookmarks." The performance elicited many comments from the audience and apologies to Hank Williams.

Recording and Machine Workshops for TBL

The response to the recent Talking Book Library's (TBL) Recording (April 25) and Machine Repair (June 26) Workshops were very positive. Laura Giannarelli from the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) was the presenter for the Recording Workshops. Laura, a narrator for NLS who has recorded over 230 books, gave a general overview of how the NLS studios work, and shared some of her experiences in recording talking books.

"We hadn't had a recording workshop for several years so we asked NLS if they could send someone to update us. This also gave us a chance to review and clarify our procedures, to share recording 'tricks' and to exchange information," said Christie Briggs, Regional Librarian for the TBL.

Recording team members and all interested volunteers were invited to attend the workshop in Helena. All the recording team members at the State Prison studio attended the workshop there. The workshops generated such comments as "Boy, she really knows what she's talking about." And, "I felt like she was talking directly to me."

Kevin Buck and Kevin Watson, also from NLS, conducted a machine repair workshop for the Telephone Pioneers in Helena. Tom Basinger, coordinator of the repair group, said, "It was pretty good." Local "pioneer" Chuck Wirth demonstrated tools he invented which assist in certain repair functions. The "Kevins" shared updated NLS information on repair procedures.



Left to right: Chuck Wirth, Howard Bloom, Tom Basinger, Kevin Watson, NLS, and John Doig.

NRIS Receives Grant!

The Natural Resource Information System (NRIS) of MSL received word in September of a \$238,000 National Leadership Grant award in the Research and Demonstration category from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). NRIS was one of 10 recipients of awards from 32 applications.

The two year project, entitled *'Development and Demonstration of a State Lead Library Model for Providing Effective Public Access to Digital Map and Related Spatial Data Through the Internet'* will focus on designing and developing a user-friendly, web-based distribution system that provides Internet access to extensive digital map data.

NRIS has hundreds of map data layers currently available in its clearinghouse including: data about *people and places* (e.g. city locations, census tract data); *land and water* (e.g. highways, railroads, streams, lakes, soils, vegetation, fisheries); *administrative boundaries* (e.g. county boundaries, mining districts, forest service boundaries, hunting districts); and *environmental monitoring* (e.g. abandoned mines, landfills, superfund sites, USGS stream gauges). Each layer depicts the particular feature (say, the highway) plus attribute information about the feature (highway name, route number, length, etc.).

The new system will provide patrons with essential tools for manipulating, interpreting and analyzing this information. For example, a patron may want to know where to go fishing for brook trout within a 10 mile radius of Helena. With this new tool, the patron could draw a 10 mile circle around Helena, and the system would select all the streams within that circle that contain brook trout, and return the results to the patron. The system could also be used to show public fishing access sites and land ownership along the stream banks of interest.

In essence, NRIS will provide much of the power and functionality of a full-fledged GIS system to a broad community of users requiring nothing more than a current Internet browser. Work on the project will begin this fall.

COLLECTION MANAGEMENT HONOR ROLL FOR 2000

The Collection Management Honor Roll is produced each year by the Montana State Library Commission to give recognition to those Montana libraries demonstrating a long-term commitment to building a shared database in Montana. The Honor Roll for 2000 will be announced at the MLA awards luncheon at the annual conference next April in Kalispell. Certificates will be awarded at the luncheon to all libraries meeting the four requirements to be included in the Honor Roll:

- 1) The library has an approved Collection Management Policy (CMP) on file at Montana State Library.
- 2) The library's CMP has been appropriately updated and is current.
- 3) The library has over 50% of its titles entered on the OCLC/WLN database.
- 4) The library has been actively adding/deleting titles to/from the OCLC/WLN database for at least the past three years.

If your library has a Collection Management Policy on file at MSL, you will be receiving notification of the status of that policy. If the CMP for your library is not current, then the revision or update of that policy would need to be completed and submitted for approval before February 1, 2001 in order for the library to be considered for the Honor Roll for 2000. A library that wishes to be considered for the Honor Roll needs to submit a copy of its CMP to the State Library for review and approval by the January deadline.

Due to the merger last year of OCLC/WLN, it was not possible for MSL to receive holdings and activity data for 1999. We have recently been informed that this data for Montana libraries will again be available to MSL to be used for determining the 2000 Honor Roll.

If you have questions about the Honor Roll or the status of your library's Collection Management Policy, please contact Sue Jackson at 1-800-338-5087 or 444-5350 or sujackson@state.mt.us.

Report from Lewistown

MSL hosted the second annual Fall Workshop for Montana librarians and trustees in Lewistown on September 22-23. This year 85 librarians registered for the workshop, but due to a nasty fall snowstorm, only 70 reached Lewistown. The group was a good mix: 51 from public libraries, two from public/school libraries, 11 from school libraries, four from academic libraries, and two from special libraries.

The librarians attended training sessions on topics such as accounting skills, personnel issues, providing advanced reference services, weeding library collections, and managing Windows files. Also, the group visited the beautifully refurbished St. Joseph's Hospital (now Fountain Terrace Condominiums), dined at the Pine Meadow Country Club, and enjoyed a guided tour of the local library.

MSL thanks all of the librarians who attended and all of the presenters who shared their knowledge and expertise with us all. Presenters included Brad Coon from MSU-Bozeman, Kathy Mora from Great Falls Public Library, Jim Nys from Personnel Plus!, Kurt Stovall from The Gale Group, and MSL staff members Bob Cooper, Diane Gunderson, Suzanne Reymer, and Darlene Staffeldt. Special thanks goes to Bridgett Johnson, director, and the staff of the Lewistown Public Library for invaluable assistance with the planning and organizing for the workshop. The Fall Workshop was funded with Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant funds awarded by the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and the MSL Commission.

MSL Evaluation

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) requires that each state library evaluate its progress at meeting the objectives stated in its long-range plan. MSL is beginning this process by drafting a request for proposals, which will solicit evaluation proposals from companies. MSL requires that the selected evaluator conduct a series of meetings throughout the state in spring, 2001, to seek information from librarians and trustees about the past efforts of MSL. Also, the evaluator will ask meeting participants for their opinions about a new plan for the state library. The evaluators will also evaluate the Talking Book Library and scan the most recently adopted plans of NRIS and the Library and Information Services Division to assess progress.

As soon as the contractor is hired, MSL will negotiate meeting dates and make several announcements about the time and place of the meetings throughout the state. The federation coordinators have generously agreed, whenever possible, to make these events a part of the spring federation meetings.

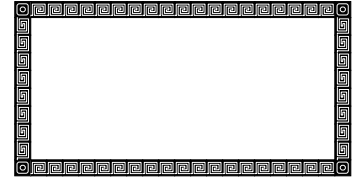
LIP Project Spawns Madison County Ballot Issues

The Library Improvement Project for Madison County (LIP) has resulted in a county library system consolidation and funding option going to a vote in the November 7, 2000 general election. The LIP was designed to demonstrate the value of coordinated library services and the benefits of forming a countywide library system. The project's goal is for a library consolidation petition effort to be launched prior to the general election. LIP received a \$40,000 grant from the Library Services and Technology Act. LIP-sponsored projects included public library access at the Harrison School Library, more rural area bookdrops, expanded library hours, and new print and electronic resources at all four public libraries in Madison County.

The Madison County Library Board directed the LIP effort, working closely with an advisory committee representing the communities of Ennis, Sheridan, Twin Bridges, Virginia City and the non-municipal areas of Madison County. "Everyone who has been involved with the LIP project deserves a great deal of credit for all of the work they have done during the last eighteen months to promote and improve library services in Madison County," said Karen Strege, State Librarian. "The Advisory Committee, local library boards and library staff, and city and county officials have supported the project. They are directly responsible for its primary goal being accomplished. Committee members and other supporters of LIP successfully promoted the benefits of countywide library service, and now the voters will make the final decision about the future of their libraries. That is exactly what we envisioned as the outcome of the project."



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Karen Strege, State Librarian

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Jim Hill and wife Nancy, on a cruise of
the Inside Passage from Lake Vancou-
ver to Alaska.

Spotlight: Jim Hill, Director of the Natural Resource Information System

Jim Hill became a member of the Montana State Library staff on September 25th, as director of the Natural Resource Information System. Jim comes to us from the Department of Environmental Quality [DEQ] where he managed the Technical Services Bureau, a unit whose duties included serving the information technology needs of a division as well as regulatory functions for the underground storage tank program. Prior to his stint with DEQ, Jim managed various regulatory programs and information systems for the Department of Health and Environmental Sciences.

Jim spent the first eighteen years of his life in Butte, where he met his wife Nancy. They attended Montana Tech, married, and finished college at Montana State University, where Jim received a degree in Microbiology, and Nancy received one in Engineering Science. After considering pursuing careers in far-away places, they decided to stay close to home to maintain family ties in Butte and Helena.

Jim and Nancy have four children, all of whom have left home to make their way in the world (Stefanie in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Joselyn in Seattle, Washington, Kathryn in Moscow, Idaho, and Michael just starting college at Montana State University in Bozeman.).